

### Abstract

The present invention relates to an apparatus and method for checking bank notes for their state of use, in particular dirt and stains which can impair the service value of the bank notes.

For checking bank notes for dirt and stains, one usually illuminates the bank notes by means of at least one light source and evaluates the diffusely reflected light by means of suitable optical sensors. However the problem arises that particularly places on the bank note which contain security features like watermarks are evaluated as stains or soiled places.

In the present invention two identical illumination and sensor units are disposed on both sides of a transport path for bank notes to be checked. The illumination and sensor units of both sides are disposed in such a way as to be aligned with a given place. Illumination at the same time and of the same kind from both sides avoids misjudgments in areas, e.g. in the area of the watermark. Additionally it is possible to judge the front and back of bank notes to be checked simultaneously.